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SIPDIS
TELEGRAM

December 30, 2003

To: No Action Addressee
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From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 5428 - ROUTINE)
TAGS: OIIP, OEXC, KPAO
Captions: None
Subject: US SPEAKER PHILIP REEKER DISCUSSES REGIONAL ISSUES WITH UAE MEDIA
Ref: None

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 05428

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CXABU:
ACTION: PAO
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CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: ADCM:HOLSIN-WINDCKER
DRAFTED: PAO:AHOSHAN
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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2842
INFO RUEHZM/GCC COLLECTIVE

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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/PPD; NEA/ARP; ECA; IIP/G/NEA TSCOTT;
NEA/PI; PA/FO

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: OIIP OEXC KPAO TC
SUBJECT: US SPEAKER PHILIP REEKER DISCUSSES REGIONAL
ISSUES WITH UAE MEDIA

¶1. SUMMARY: PHILIP REEKER, SPOKESMAN-AT-LARGE AND FORMER DOS DEPUTY SPOKESMAN AND DAS FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS, VISITED THE UAE ON DECEMBER 15. HIS PROGRAM INCLUDED A VISIT TO THE EMIRATES INSTITUTE OF DIPLOMACY, A VISIT TO THE EMIRATES CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND RESEARCH, A ONE-ON-ONE WITH THE UAE SEMI-OFFICIAL ARABIC "AL ITTIHAD" DAILY, A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION WITH NEWS EDITORS AND PRODUCERS OF AL-ARABIYAH SATELLITE CHANNEL, AND TWO TV INTERVIEWS WITH AL-ARABIYAH AND THE MIDDLE EAST BROADCASTING CENTER (MBC). BY ADDRESSING A LARGE NUMBER OF DIFFERENT MEDIA, DAS REEKER GAINED THE ATTENTION OF UAE AND REGIONAL AUDIENCES TO EXPLAIN U.S. POLICIES ON

SEVERAL IMPORTANT REGIONAL ISSUES. END SUMMARY.

12. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM: POST HOSTED PHILIP REEKER, SPOKESMAN-AT-LARGE AND FORMER DOS DEPUTY SPOKESMAN AND DAS FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS ON DECEMBER 15. THE PA SECTION ARRANGED A VISIT TO THE EMIRATES INSTITUTE OF DIPLOMACY AND A MEETING WITH ITS DIRECTOR DR. YOUSUF AL-HASAN. AFTER DISCUSSING CURRENT TRENDS IN THE GCC AND THE UAE, REEKER OUTLINED THE US ADMINISTRATION'S COMMITMENT TO PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HE ALSO DISCUSSED THE ISSUE OF CONTRACTING IN IRAQ AND EXPLAINED THE US DECISION TO BAN CERTAIN COMPANIES FROM PRIMARY CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS.

SYRIA ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

13. THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE PROGRAM WAS THE ROUNDTABLE WITH NEWS EDITORS AND PRODUCERS AT AL ARABIYAH. DURING THIS EVENT, DAS REEKER DISCUSSED THE SYRIA ACCOUNTABILITY ACT AND EXPLAINED SYRIA'S FAILURE TO FIGHT TERRORISM AND DISCLOSE ITS PROGRAM OF WEAPONS OF WMD. LATER, DAS REEKER REITERATED THESE POINTS IN SEPARATE INTERVIEWS WITH SATELLITE TELEVISION STATIONS MBC AND AL ARABIYAH. DAS REEKER'S INTERVIEWS WERE CARRIED ON SEVERAL NEWS BROADCASTS AND NEW PROGRAMS ON BOTH CHANNELS.

14. AS A RESULT OF HIS INTERVIEW, AL-ITTIHAD CARRIED A QUARTER-PAGE STORY WITH THE HEADLINE: "REEKER TELLS 'AL-ITTIHAD': DAMASCUS HAS FAILED TO MEET ITS COMMITMENTS TO EXPEL TERRORIST GROUPS." IN THIS ARTICLE, DAS REEKER EXPLAINED THAT HIS CURRENT TRIP CAME IN RESPONSE TO INSTRUCTIONS BY SECRETARY POWELL, WHO WANTED HIM TO GET FIRST-HAND IMPRESSIONS OF PUBLIC OPINION IN THE REGION. AT THE SAME TIME, SECRETARY POWELL URGED HIM TO EDUCATE HIS AUDIENCE ON HOW A VARIETY OF U.S. INSTITUTIONS PLAY A ROLE IN THE POLICY-MAKING PROCESS, THUS BOOSTING DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE REGION. IN REFERENCE TO THE MIDDLE EAST PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE, DAS REEKER WAS ALSO QUOTED AS SAYING, "THE U.S. DOES NOT INTEND TO IMPOSE ITS DEMOCRACY ON THE REGION BUT TO ENCOURAGE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES THAT ARE COMPATIBLE WITH THE NATURE OF EACH NATION ..."

COMPLEXITIES OF US FOREIGN POLICY FORMULATION

15. RESULT/IMPACT: EXCELLENT. AS A FORMER DEPUTY SPOKESMAN WITH KNOWLEDGE OF THE REGION, DAS REEKER SPOKE WITH AUTHORITY ON A WIDE RANGE OF REGIONAL ISSUES INCLUDING THE ROADMAP, IRAQ AND THE SYRIA ACCOUNTABILITY ACT. DAS REEKER EXPLAINED HOW U.S. POLICY IS FORMULATED, THE VARIOUS CURRENTS OF PUBLIC OPINION AND THE WAY IN WHICH LOBBIES AND INTEREST GROUPS INFLUENCE THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES, AND THE U.S. DECISION ON RECONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS IN IRAQ. AT A TIME OF CONTINUED HOSTILITY TOWARDS U.S. POLICIES IN THE REGION, DAS REEKER GAINED THE ATTENTION AND UNDERSTANDING FROM SEVERAL AUDIENCES ON KEY USG ISSUES. POST COMMENDS PA FOR ESTABLISHING POSITION OF SPOKESMAN AT LARGE AND HOPES TO HAVE SIMILAR VISITS IN THE FUTURE.

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